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Questionnaire study in which 93 activities in 9 professional areas (methods, planning, classroom management, teaching aids, evaluations and grading, clerical routines, individuals pupil behavior, staff relations, and parent relations) are judged as presenting different degrees of difficulty to beginning teachers. Methods and planning are rated as most difficult areas; clerical routines and staff relations, the least. Differences in school population and situation have little effect on difficulties.

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# PROFESSIONAL DIFFICULTIES OF BEGINNING ELEMENTARY SCHOOL TEACHERS AS SEEN BY ELEMENTARY SCHOOL PRINCIPALS

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# I. SUMMARY

This study is based on the responses of 269 elementary school principals (162 in Manhattan and the Bronx; 107 in Long Island) to a checklist questionnaire on the difficulties of beginning teachers.

What do these principals think? The 93 activities in 9 professional areas (methods, planning, classroom management, teaching aids, evaluation and grading, clerical routines, individual pupil behavior, staff relations, and parent relations) are judged to present different degrees of difficulty to beginning teachers. Beginning teachers are judged to experience some but not great difficulty in carrying out typical professional activities.

Methods and planning are rated most difficult as areas. Those rated least difficult are clerical routines and staff relations.

The most difficult specific activities are those requiring teachers to adapt teaching methods and materials to different pupil abilities, achievement, and background, and those that call for use of cooperative group procedures.

Differences in school population and situation make relatively little difference in the difficulties beginning teachers face. Principals in schools classified as "average" (on the criteria of average IQ, free lunch registration, and language handicap) rate all 9 professional areas more difficult for beginning teachers than do principals of "difficult" or "good" New York City schools or principals of Long Island schools.

What help do principals think beginning teachers want? New York City and Long Island principals differ only slightly in their estimates of help

desired by beginning elementary teachers.

New York City principals think these teachers want in-service help in classroom management and discipline, general methods, and planning, and in methods of teaching reading, mathematics, and social studies.

Long Island principals think beginning elementary school teachers want in-service help in classroom management and discipline, general methods, individual behavior and adjustment problems, and in methods of teaching reading, science, and mathematics.

What suggestions do these principals make? In pre-service education these principals suggest more careful screening of prospective teachers, classroom observation before student teaching, and student teaching in "difficult" schools.

They advise the college to offer graduate in-service programs that emphasize practical, specific classroom materials and procedures.

They recommend that such in-service courses be organized on workshop and problem-solving bases.

They propose that schools and colleges explore ways of closer collaboration in planning and staffing in-service courses.

They suggest that the college offer graduate in-service courses within school districts.

## II. BACKGROUND OF THE STUDY

The first years of teaching are likely to be of critical importance in encouraging or discouraging teachers in their profession. These years are important, too, in establishing habits of approaching problems analytically and constructively. The number and kind of problems encountered by beginning teachers may be a determining factor in their continuing in the profession. The amount and quality of assistance they receive in meeting these problems may well make the difference between their viewing these problems as insurmountable or as challenging.

Undoubtedly beginning teachers have always faced problems, especially problems of classroom control and problems in devising varied and effective instructional methods. But the problems of teachers beginning their teaching at this time are probably more than usually numerous and difficult. The sharp rise in school population in recent years places many new teachers in overcrowded classrooms or in double session programs. Schools and school systems have had to expand their personnel so rapidly that they are unable to provide the kind of assistance formerly available to newly appointed teachers. There are not enough supervising principals, special subject supervisors, and experienced teachers to go around. In the metropolitan area, where the majority of Hunter College graduates begin their teaching, many schools have large numbers of beginning teachers; often the schools where these teachers are placed are struggling with the special problems of an increasing number of non-English-speaking children and children from deprived and broken homes.

School administrators are well aware of these difficulties. In certain schools special efforts are made to provide some form of in-service assistance for beginning teachers. Sometimes principals and teachers themselves are critical of the preparation they have had: colleges are urged to prepare teachers "more realistically," to see to it that their graduates are acquainted with all of the details of classroom routines, often very different from school to school. On the other hand, colleges raise questions as to whether some aspects of the teacher's work must not of necessity be learned in service.

The importance of the early years of teaching was recognized by the New York State Lieutenant Governor's Advisory Committee for the Study of Teachers' Salaries. The initial years, the Committee declared,

> if properly planned, could develop many young teachers into competent classroom leaders. [These years] should be treated as an internship. . . it would involve a much closer relationship between the colleges that educate teachers and the school system that employs their graduates. It would mean an in-service educational program for beginning teachers based on classroom needs.[1]

The present study is one of several undertaken in the hope that systematic inquiry into the problems of beginning teachers would contribute to plans for improving the preparation of elementary school teachers and would suggest problem areas on which the schools and the college might collaborate in improving the in-service education of these teachers. In the first two studies in this series the investigators obtained data from

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[1]Lieutenant Governor's Advisory Committee for the Study of Teachers' Salaries. Report on Teachers' Salaries. Albany, New York, March 3, 1951. p. 20.

the two groups who seem most likely to be able to speak authoritatively about the problems of beginning teachers: the beginning teachers themselves, and elementary school principals, whose responsibility it is to supervise and evaluate these teachers during their probationary years.

This report presents the judgments of elementary school principals as to the kinds and difficulty of problems encountered by beginning elementary school teachers.

## III. AIMS OF THE STUDY

This study aims to answer the following questions:

1. What activities do elementary school principals think present the greatest difficulty for beginning elementary school teachers?[2]
2. Do principals in different types of school situations differ in their judgments of beginning teachers' difficulties?
3. In what professional areas do principals think beginning teachers desire in-service assistance?
4. What suggestions have principals for school and college collaboration in in-service education for beginning teachers?

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[2]For purposes of this study beginning teachers are defined as "those who have taught for less than three years."

## IV. PROCEDURES

The Checklist. This study is based on a checklist of teacher activities to be rated according to their presumed difficulty for beginning elementary school teachers.[3] The checklist includes 93 teacher activities in nine areas:

1. classroom management and control
2. methods
3. teaching materials and aids
4. planning
5. staff relations
6. parent relations
7. clerical routines
8. evaluation and grading
9. individual pupil behavior.

These areas were not, however, categorized on the checklist. The checklist asks the respondent to rate each of the 93 activities on a four-point scale from "easy" to "very difficult" for beginning teachers, or to indicate that the activity "does not apply" to his school situation.

The 93-item checklist was supplemented by questions which call on the principal to indicate the kinds of in-service assistance he thinks these teachers would select if given the opportunity.

Principals were also asked to describe briefly programs for induction

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[3]The development of the checklist is described in the report on the beginning teachers own perceptions of their difficulties.

or in-service training in their schools and to suggest ways in which the college might assist in in-service education.

The checklist ended with an invitation to principals to comment on it and in particular to indicate difficulties omitted from the questionnaire. A number of principals commended the coverage and specificity of the items. Several principals suggested that the list of activities might be used as a basis for in-service conferences. With very few exceptions each of the original 93 items was rated by a large majority of the responding principals; very few items received a significant number of "does not apply" ratings. No additional items were mentioned frequently enough to be reported. It appears then that within the limits of a paper and pencil checklist the questionnaire presents a realistic sample of activities characterizing the professional tasks of the elementary school teacher.

The Population. It was considered important to include in the population principals from schools and school districts representative of those where the majority of Hunter College graduates accept initial teaching positions. The annual employment status surveys of municipal college teacher education graduates show that New York City and Long Island are the communities where the largest number of Hunter graduates are placed. At the time of the study nearly three-fourths of the graduates of the elementary teacher program at Hunter College were beginning their teaching in public schools in these two areas. The selection of these two areas for the present study was thus clearly indicated.

The checklist was mailed to all public elementary school principals in Manhattan, the Bronx, Nassau, and Suffolk. A total of 369 checklists

were mailed; 269 usable returns were received. Table I shows the number of checklists mailed and returned.

Table I

Number of Checklists Mailed to and Returned by Principals in New York City and Long Island

| Locality | Number Mailed | Usable Returns n | % |
|---|---|---|---|
| Manhattan and Bronx | 197 | 162 | 82 |
| Long Island | 172 | 107 | 62 |
| Total | 369 | 269 | 73 |

The total percentage of usable returns and the percentage for each of the localities is substantial enough to warrant confidence in the results.

It is often assumed that the schools in a large metropolis like New York present quite different teaching situations according to the character of their pupil populations. The Manhattan and Bronx elementary schools included in this study were grouped in three categories: "good," "difficult," and "average." These classifications are based on the percentage of the pupil population who are non-English speaking, the percentage in the free-lunch program, and the average pupil IQ. An index for each of the 156 schools for which these data were available was computed and the schools divided into three groups: 58 "good," 40 "average," and 58 "difficult."

Method. The mean difficulty was computed for each of the 93 activities and for the nine professional areas. These means were compared for New York City and Long Island returns and for the three categories of New York City schools. The rank order of difficulties within professional areas was established for these same groups. A comparison of the rank order of teachers' presumed choices of professional areas for in-service study was made on the same basis.

Comparison of principals' ratings of the difficulty of activities in the nine professional areas with their estimates of teachers' wishes for assistance in these areas indicates that the questionnaires were discriminatingly answered.

## V. RESULTS

What activities do elementary school principals think present the greatest difficulty for beginning elementary school teachers? An analysis of returns reveals that principals judge the nine areas and specific activities within them to be of varying degrees of difficulty. The ratings of difficulty were quantified on a scale from 1 to 4, with 1 representing a rating of "easy," and 4 equivalent to "very difficult." This group of principals reports that beginning teachers have some difficulty with almost all of the activities included in the checklist. Only seven of the ninety-three activities received mean ratings under 2, and three of these fall within a single area, that of staff relations. At the same time, relatively few activities received mean ratings toward the top of the scale of difficulty. Only eleven activities have mean ratings of 3 or above, and none a mean rating of 4 or "very difficult." As a group, then, these 269 principals may be said to view beginning elementary teachers, again considered as a group, as experiencing numerous but not great difficulties in carrying out typical professional activities.

Table 2 shows the mean difficulty and rank of each of the nine areas of classroom activities. In general, New York City and Long Island principals agree in their ranking of the nine areas.

Both groups consider that teaching methods present substantial difficulties and that clerical activities are relatively "easy." As is shown in Table 3, all but one of the activities in the category of methods received ratings above 2.5, midway in the scale of difficulty. A third of

Table 2

Elementary School Principals' Judgments of the Degree of Difficulty of Nine Areas of Professional Activity: Mean Difficulty in Rank Order by Area

| Area | Number of Activities in the Area (n=93) | Manhattan & Bronx | | Long Island | | Total | |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| | | Rank | Mean | Rank | Mean | Rank | Mean |
| Methods* | 12 | 1 | 3.01 | 1 | 2.69 | 1 | 2.85 |
| Planning* | 11 | 2 | 2.89 | 3 | 2.60 | 2 | 2.75 |
| Parent Relations | 6 | 4 | 2.68 | 2 | 2.62 | 3 | 2.65 |
| Individual Behavior* | 13 | 3 | 2.79 | 4 | 2.50 | 4 | 2.65 |
| Evaluation | 9 | 5 | 2.65 | 5 | 2.43 | 5 | 2.54 |
| Management* | 16 | 6 | 2.50 | 7 | 2.24 | 6 | 2.37 |
| Aids | 12 | 7 | 2.39 | 6 | 2.34 | 7 | 2.36 |
| Clerical | 6 | 8 | 2.30 | 8 | 2.17 | 8 | 2.23 |
| Staff Relations | 8 | 9 | 1.89 | 9 | 1.95 | 9 | 1.92 |

*The mean ratings of these areas are significantly different for New York City and Long Island principals.

Table 3

Principals' Ratings of Difficulty for Beginning Elementary Teachers of Ninety-Three Activities in Nine Professional Areas

| Activities by Area | Mean Rating |
|---|---|
| **Classroom Management** | |
| Managing the distribution and collection of materials, milk, etc. | 2.04 |
| Using children fairly and effectively as classroom helpers and monitors | 2.21 |
| Teaching children to follow class procedure in answering questions | 2.74 |
| Arranging for hanging up and getting children's wraps | 1.95 |
| Knowing what to do when children bring comic books, toys, etc., to class (if against regulations) | 2.29 |
| Maintaining order during fire drills | 2.11 |
| Handling instances of theft or cheating | 3.01 |
| Escorting classes through the halls | 2.35 |
| Managing shifts from one activity to another | 2.61 |
| Handling lunchroom and playground duties | 2.53 |
| Setting up good routines for entering and leaving the classroom | 2.41 |
| Knowing how to use moveable furniture effectively | 2.50 |
| Teaching good manners | 2.36 |
| Explaining and enforcing school regulations | 2.48 |
| Making arrangements for field trips | 2.10 |
| Maintaining order during field trips | 2.28 |
| **Methods** | |
| Maintaining children's interest throughout a unit of work | 2.76 |
| Differentiating instruction for slow, average, and gifted children | 3.20 |
| Teaching non-English-speaking children | 3.30 |
| Formulating stimulating questions | 2.80 |
| Using vocabulary that children understand | 2.27 |
| Making discussion a group activity | 2.74 |
| Making drill interesting | 2.81 |
| Striking a balance between competition and cooperation | 2.70 |
| Knowing when to use rewards, encouragement, and when to use punishments | 2.62 |
| Using the committee method | 3.14 |
| Teaching reading to retarded readers | 3.24 |
| Relating children's daily experiences to curriculum areas | 2.63 |

Table 3 (continued)

Principals' Ratings of Difficulty for Beginning Elementary Teachers of Ninety-Three Activities in Nine Professional Areas

| Activities by Area | Mean Rating |
|---|---|
| **Aids** | |
| Finding reading materials for retarded readers | 2.90 |
| Coordinating films shown in the school film program with classwork | 2.50 |
| Making teaching materials by ditto or mimeograph | 2.00 |
| Learning to know community resources that can be used in teaching | 2.56 |
| Using representative materials in developmental mathematics | 2.42 |
| Coordinating the use of community resources with other teachers' use of them | 2.66 |
| Making use of children's home experiences with radio and television | 2.23 |
| Using the flannel board | 1.80 |
| Making use of the Board of Education radio programs | 2.19 |
| Preparing simple demonstrations in science | 2.67 |
| Selecting a classroom library | 2.14 |
| Using the bulletin board effectively in teaching | 2.27 |
| **Planning** | |
| Finding out what the work of the grade is supposed to cover | 2.56 |
| Planning the work of a week or longer period | 2.26 |
| Working out details of sequence and timing for daily units of work | 2.78 |
| Keeping on schedule | 2.66 |
| Planning assembly programs | 2.32 |
| Determining how fast children can learn | 2.99 |
| Planning first-hand experiences leading to learnings in basic skills and concepts | 2.81 |
| Setting up groups in mathematics and reading | 2.65 |
| Using sociometric procedures for setting up groups | 3.10 |
| Involving children in planning | 2.87 |
| Planning work to keep one or more groups constructively occupied while working with another group | 3.15 |

Table 3 (continued)

Principals' Ratings of Difficulty for Beginning Elementary Teachers of Ninety-Three Activities in Nine Professional Areas

| Activities by Area | Mean Rating |
|---|---|
| **Staff Relations** | |
| Getting help from more experienced colleagues | 1.70 |
| Understanding what supervisors want | 2.04 |
| Getting help from the principal in disciplining pupils | 1.57 |
| Teaching as usual during class visits of the principal or supervisor | 2.19 |
| Getting the feeling of "belonging" to the staff | 1.47 |
| Interpreting suggestions from the school psychologist or guidance officer for handling certain children | 2.32 |
| Coordinating work with that of teachers of special subjects | 2.03 |
| Adapting teaching and ideas to the customs of the school | 2.01 |
| **Parent Relations** | |
| Explaining to parents the difficulties of their children | 2.65 |
| Getting parents to take an interest in their children's schooling | 2.38 |
| Communicating with foreign-language-speaking parents | 3.12 |
| Reaching parents it is most necessary to see | 2.64 |
| Getting to know the family backgrounds of pupils | 2.36 |
| Explaining modern methods of teaching to parents | 2.74 |
| **Clerical** | |
| Getting parents to understand the reporting system | 2.42 |
| Keeping attendance records | 2.16 |
| Making anecdotal records | 2.59 |
| Making reports on children to be referred to specialists | 2.28 |
| Ordering, securing, and accounting for supplies and equipment | 2.06 |
| Keeping plan book up to date | 1.87 |
| **Evaluation and Grading** | |
| Interpreting the results of standardized tests and scales | 2.46 |
| Knowing how to evaluate changes in children's behavior | 2.85 |
| Preparing classroom tests | 2.27 |
| Choosing appropriate standardized instruments of evaluation | 2.64 |
| Including pupil self-evaluation activities as a regular part of teaching | 2.96 |
| Recording non-test information useful in evaluation | 2.68 |
| Taking account of effort and ability in giving grades | 2.31 |
| Translating tests and daily records into report card grades | 2.39 |
| Explaining grades to children | 2.26 |

Table 3 (continued)

Principals' Ratings of Difficulty for Beginning Elementary Teachers of Ninety-Three Activities in Nine Professional Areas

| Activities by Area | Mean Rating |
|---|---|
| Individual Behavior | |
| Identifying children in need of psychological testing or counseling | 2.27 |
| Accepting children's aggressive behavior toward the teacher | 2.90 |
| Getting the class to accept handicapped children | 1.91 |
| Handling the "show off" | 2.82 |
| Working with children with speech difficulties | 2.65 |
| Recognizing symptoms of physical illness or impairment | 2.07 |
| Dealing with overly dependent children | 2.63 |
| Finding ways to integrate isolated, disliked children in group activities | 2.89 |
| Handling cliques | 2.79 |
| Dealing with name calling or other expressions of prejudice | 2.62 |
| Handling children's aggressive behavior toward one another | 2.76 |
| Dealing with extreme possessiveness, selfishness | 2.69 |
| Keeping the genuinely disturbed child from disrupting classwork | 3.38 |

the items in this category are rated above 3 in difficulty and account for four of the eleven "most difficult" activities of the ninety-three. Noo other category has as many activities that principals consider difficult.

In some categories--those dealing with teachers' knowledge and use of teaching aids, with staff relations, and with clerical routines--there are no activities that principals rate as difficult as 3. Only in the group of activities relating to planning--an area akin to methods--do principals rate more than a single item 3 or above.

Table 4 shows the eleven specific activities among the ninety-three that are considered most difficult by this group of principals. It will be noted that the problems judged most difficult for beginning teachers are chiefly of two kinds: those calling for the teacher to adapt his teaching to the needs of children of different ability, achievement, and background, and those calling for the use of group procedures in teaching.

The activities considered least difficult for beginning teachers are listed in Table 5. Three of these deal with staff relations. It will be seen that principals do not think that beginning teachers find it difficult to establish good working relationships with their colleagues.

Do principals in different types of schools differ in their judgments of beginning teachers' difficulties? Despite their general agreement as to the degree of difficulty of the nine professional areas and specific items within each area, principals in Long Island and in New York City schools do differ at certain points. As is evident in Table 2, suburban principals tend to regard these professional areas as somewhat less difficult for

Table 4

Activities Judged Most Difficult for Beginning

Elementary Teachers by All Principals (n = 269)

| Activity | Mean Rating | Rank Order |
|---|---|---|
| Keeping the genuinely disturbed child from disrupting class | 3.44 | 1 |
| Teaching non-English-speaking children | 3.35 | 2 |
| Teaching reading to retarded readers | 3.28 | 3 |
| Differentiating instruction for slow, average, and gifted children | 3.24 | 4 |
| Using the committee method | 3.22 | 5 |
| Planning work to keep one or more groups constructively occupied while working with another group | 3.21 | 6 |
| Using sociometric procedures for setting up groups | 3.15 | 7 |
| Communicating with foreign-language-speaking parents | 3.11 | 8 |
| Handling instances of theft or cheating | 3.05 | 9 |
| Determining how fast children can learn | 3.00 | 10.5 |
| Including pupil self-evaluation as a regular part of teaching | 3.00 | 10.5 |

Table 5

Activities Judged Least Difficult for Beginning Elementary Teachers by All Principals (n = 269)

| Activity | Mean Rating | Rank Order |
|---|---|---|
| Getting the feeling of "belonging" to the staff | 1.47 | 1 |
| Getting help from the principal in disciplining pupils | 1.57 | 2 |
| Getting help from more experienced colleagues | 1.70 | 3 |
| Using the flannel board | 1.80 | 4 |
| Keeping plan book up to date | 1.87 | 5 |
| Getting the class to accept handicapped children | 1.91 | 6 |
| Arranging for hanging up and getting children's wraps | 1.95 | 7 |

beginning teachers than New York City principals do. Only in the area of staff relations is the Long Island principals' rating of difficulty higher than that of their New York City colleagues; even in this instance, the difference in ratings is not statistically significant.

Table 6, which gives the rank order difficulty of specific activities in each of the nine areas, reveals certain activities not to be applicable to an equal degree to Long Island and New York City school situations. The differences in applicability are probably related to differences in school population and school facilities. It is not surprising that activities in which teachers work with non-English speaking children and their parents (items 19 and 62) are marked "does not apply" by so many Long Island principals. Since New York City schools do not have special teachers in music and art, it is, if anything, surprising that an even larger percentage of these principals do not consider item 58, "coordinating work with that of teachers of special subjects," inapplicable. Differences in viewing item 75, "choosing appropriate standardized instruments of evaluation," as inapplicable are not easily accounted for. Beginning teachers generally may have little opportunity for making such choices; apparently Long Island teachers have somewhat more occasion to make them than do beginning teachers in New York City schools.

One of the chief concerns of the investigators was to determine whether principals of New York City schools considered "difficult" think that beginning teachers face more or more serious difficulties in carrying out typical professional activities than are reported by principals of more

Table 6

Rank Order Difficulty of Activities in each of Nine Professional Areas for Beginning Elementary School Teachers as Judged by Elementary School Principals

| Rank Difficulty | Activities | | | | | | | | |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| | Classroom Management | Methods | Teaching Aids and Materials | Planning | Staff Relations | Parent Relations | Clerical Routines | Evaluation and Grading | Individual Behavior |
| 1 | 7 | 19[1] | 29 | 41 | 56 | 64 | 71 | 80 | 93 |
| 2 | 3 | 27 | 36 | 42 | 54 | 61 | 67 | 74 | 82 |
| 3 | 9 | 18 | 37[2] | 45 | 58[3] | 63 | 70 | 78 | 88 |
| 4 | 10 | 26 | 31 | 44 | 52 | 60 | 69 | 79 | 84 |
| 5 | 12 | 20 | 39 | 48 | 59 | 65 | 66 | 72 | 89 |
| 6 | 14 | 23 | 35 | 43 | 53 | 62[4] | 68 | 75[5] | 91 |
| 7 | 11 | 17 | 40 | 47 | 55 | | | 77 | 92 |
| 8 | 8 | 22 | 33 | 50 | 57 | | | 73 | 87 |
| 9 | 13 | 24 | 30 | 46 | | | | 76 | 90 |
| 10 | 16 | 25 | 32 | 49 | | | | | 85 |
| 11 | 5 | 28 | 34 | 51 | | | | | 81 |
| 12 | 2 | 21 | 38 | | | | | | 86 |
| 13 | 6 | | | | | | | | 83 |
| 14 | 15 | | | | | | | | |
| 15 | 1 | | | | | | | | |
| 16 | 4 | | | | | | | | |

[1]Sixty-eight per cent of the principals of Long Island schools and 28 per cent of the principals of Manhattan and Bronx schools said that the activity did not apply in their school.

[2]Seventy-two per cent of the principals of Long Island schools said that the activity did not apply in their school.

[3]Forty-six per cent of the principals of Bronx and Manhattan schools said that the activity did not apply in their school.

[4]Twenty-eight per cent of the principals of Manhattan and Bronx schools and 65 per cent of the principals of Long Island schools said that the activity did not apply in their school.

[5]Thirty-five per cent of the principals of Manhattan and Bronx schools and 12 per cent of principals of Long Island schools said that the activity did not apply in their school.

favorably situated New York City schools. An analysis of data by "difficult," "average," and "good" schools is presented in Tables 7, 8, and 9.

The investigators expected that ratings of difficulty would increase from "good" through "average" to "difficult" schools. In general the data do not confirm this expectation. The rank order difficulty of these areas (Table 7) is almost identical for the three types of schools and conforms on the whole to the ranking of all principals including those from Long Island (Table 2). As Table 8 shows, the differences in the ratings of five of the nine professional areas according to the difficulty index of the schools are statistically significant. In each of these five areas, and indeed in all of the areas except that incorporating activities dealing with problems of individual pupil behavior, ratings of principals in "average" schools are higher than those of principals in either of the other categories of schools.

On the basis of the data of this study it would appear that heterogeneity of student population--on the basis of the criteria of I.Q., school lunch registration, and language deficiency--may have some bearing on principals' ratings of the difficulties encountered by beginning teachers. Other factors, such as the proportion of probationary teachers in a school, the principal's educational philosophy, and the existence of special personnel or training programs may be relevant to the variations in these ratings. These matters are not within the limits of the present study, but merit further inquiry.

Table 7

Rank Order of Mean Difficulty of Nine Professional Areas by Type of School for Manhattan and Bronx Schools

| Rank Order | School Classification | | | All Principals (n = 156) |
|---|---|---|---|---|
| | Good (n = 58) | Average (n = 40) | Difficult (n = 58) | |
| 1 | Methods | Methods | Methods | Methods |
| 2 | Planning | Planning | Planning | Planning |
| 3 | Individual Behavior | Individual Behavior | Parent Relations | Individual Behavior |
| 4 | Evaluation and Grading | Parent Relations | Individual Behavior | Parent Relations |
| 5 | Parent Relations | Evaluation and Grading | Evaluation and Grading | Evaluation and Grading |
| 6 | Management | Management | Management | Management |
| 7 | Aids | Aids | Aids | Aids |
| 8 | Clerical | Clerical | Clerical | Clerical |
| 9 | Staff Relations | Staff Relations | Staff Relations | Staff Relations |

Table 8

Mean Difficulty of Nine Professional Areas by

Type of School for Manhattan and Bronx Schools

| Area | Number of Activities in the Area | School Classification | | | All Principals (n=156) | Areas on which Principals Disagree |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| | | Good (n=58) | Average (n=40) | Difficult (n=58) | | |
| Management | 16 | 2.47 | 2.56 | 2.54 | 2.52 | * |
| Methods | 12 | 3.03 | 3.05 | 3.01 | 3.03 | NS |
| Aids | 12 | 2.35 | 2.50 | 2.42 | 2.42 | NS |
| Planning | 11 | 2.89 | 2.99 | 2.85 | 2.91 | * |
| Staff Relations | 8 | 1.83 | 1.98 | 1.92 | 1.91 | ** |
| Parent Relations | 6 | 2.56 | 2.87 | 2.82 | 2.75 | * |
| Clerical | 6 | 2.29 | 2.40 | 2.19 | 2.29 | NS |
| Evaluation and Grading | 9 | 2.64 | 2.75 | 2.64 | 2.67 | * |
| Individual Behavior | 13 | 2.80 | 2.78 | 2.79 | 2.79 | NS |

NS Nonsignificant
* .05
** .01

Table 9

Most Difficult Activities (over 3.0) of Beginning Elementary Teachers, by Type of School for Manhattan and Bronx Schools

| Activities by Areas | School Classification | | |
|---|---|---|---|
| | Good | Average | Difficult |
| **Classroom Management** | | | |
| Handling instances of theft or cheating | 3.27 | 3.23 | 3.15 |
| **Methods** | | | |
| Maintaining children's interest through a unit of work | ——* | ——* | 3.07 |
| Differentiating instruction for slow, average, and gifted children | 3.43 | 3.40 | 3.39 |
| Teaching non-English-speaking children | 3.41 | 3.41 | 3.38 |
| Formulating stimulating questions | 3.07 | ——* | ——* |
| Making discussion a group activity | 3.00 | 3.03 | ——* |
| Using the committee method | 3.43 | 3.64 | 3.48 |
| Teaching reading to retarded readers | 3.43 | 3.56 | 3.36 |
| **Aids** | | | |
| Finding reading materials for retarded readers | 3.00 | 3.05 | 3.09 |
| Preparing simple demonstrations in science | ——* | 3.18 | ——* |
| **Planning** | | | |
| Working out details of sequence and timing for daily units of work | 3.07 | 3.20 | 3.00 |
| Determining how fast children can learn | 3.16 | 3.13 | ——* |
| Planning first-hand experiences leading to learnings in basic skills and concepts | ——* | 3.18 | ——* |
| Setting up groups in mathematics and reading | ——* | 3.13 | ——* |
| Using sociometric procedures for setting up groups | 3.35 | 3.46 | 3.35 |
| Involving children in planning | 3.14 | 3.18 | 3.05 |
| Planning work to keep one or more groups constructively occupied while working with another group | 3.45 | 3.50 | 3.38 |
| **Parent Relations** | | | |
| Communicating with foreign-language speaking parents | ——* | 3.32 | 3.04 |
| Explaining modern methods of teaching to parents | ——* | 3.00 | 3.00 |

Table 9 (continued)

Most Difficult Activities (over 3.0) of Beginning Elementary Teachers, by Type of School for Manhattan and Bronx Schools

| Activities by Areas | School Classification | | |
|---|---|---|---|
| | Good | Average | Difficult |
| Evaluation and Grading | | | |
| Knowing how to evaluate changes in children's behavior | 3.02 | 3.03 | ----* |
| Choosing appropriate standardized instruments of evaluation | ----* | 3.04 | ----* |
| Including pupil self-evaluation activities as a regular part of teaching | 3.04 | 3.24 | 3.16 |
| Individual Behavior | | | |
| Accepting children's aggressive behavior toward the teacher | 3.05 | 3.20 | 3.16 |
| Handling the "show off" | 3.07 | 3.13 | ----* |
| Finding ways to integrate isolated, disliked children in group activities | 3.07 | ----* | ----* |
| Handling cliques | 3.04 | 3.14 | ----* |
| Handling children's aggressive behavior toward one another | ----* | 3.23 | 3.07 |
| Keeping the genuinely disturbed child from disrupting classwork | 3.58 | 3.78 | 3.60 |

*Rated less difficult than 3.0 in these schools.

What assistance do principals think beginning teachers would choose if given in-service opportunities? Principals were asked not only to express their own opinions on the difficulties experienced by beginning teachers but also to hazard a guess as to the kinds of in-service assistance these teachers would choose if given the opportunity. Principals' responses to this question indicate that their answers discriminate between their own analysis of teacher needs and their perception of teachers' conscious recognition of their needs.

Principals were asked to indicate which three of nine professional areas, paralleling those sampled in the main body of the checklist, they thought beginning teachers would choose if offered in-service training. They were also asked which three of nine curriculum areas they thought teachers would select for in-service training in methods. Responses to these two questions are summarized in Tables 10 and 11. It will be seen that principals think that beginning teachers' first concern is with the problems entailed in connection with classroom management and discipline. Activities involving relations with parents, which principals rank third or fourth in difficulty (Table 2), they recognize as being of even less concern to beginning teachers themselves (Table 10).

Principals in New York City and in Long Island schools think that teachers would be most interested in assistance in methods of teaching reading. Methods of teaching mathematics, science, and social studies are ranked next in importance when principals are asked to judge beginning teachers' wishes for in-service assistance. Although teachers generally

Table 10

Professional Areas in which Elementary School Principals Think Beginning Teachers Want Assistance

| Area | N. Y. C. Principals (n = 162) | | L. I. Principals (n = 107 | |
|---|---|---|---|---|
| | Weighted Score | Rank Order | Weighted Score | Rank Order |
| Classroom Management and Discipline | 72 | 1 | 40 | 1 |
| Methods | 36 | 2 | 32 | 2 |
| Planning | 28 | 3 | 14 | 6 |
| Individual Behavior and Adjustment Problems | 26 | 4 | 28 | 3 |
| Teaching aids and Materials | 16 | 5 | 24 | 4 |
| Clerical Routines | 4 | 6 | 4 | 8.5 |
| Parent Relations | 3 | 7 | 10 | 7 |
| Evaluation and Grading | 2 | 8 | 23 | 5 |
| Staff Relations | 1 | 9 | 4 | 8.5 |

Table 11

Special Methods in which Elementary School Principals

Think Beginning Teachers Want Assistance

| Area | N. Y. C. Principals (n = 162) | | L. I. Principals (n = 107) | |
|---|---|---|---|---|
| | Weighted Score | Rank Order | Weighted Score | Rank Order |
| Reading | 72 | 1 | 75 | 1 |
| Mathematics | 41 | 2 | 29 | 3 |
| Social Studies | 37 | 3 | 18 | 4 |
| Science | 24 | 4 | 37 | 2 |
| Music | 7 | 5 | 1 | 8.5 |
| Art | .6 | 6 | 9 | 5 |
| Writing | 3 | 7 | 7 | 6 |
| Speaking | 2 | 8 | 5 | 7 |
| Health | 0 | 9 | 1 | 8.5 |

have less preparation at the pre-service level in methods of teaching special subjects like music, art, and health, principals believe they are less desirous of help in these areas than in the basic subjects.

What suggestions do principals have for school and college collaboration to improve in-service education for elementary school teachers? The questionnaire invited principals to suggest ways in which the college could help with in-service training. Fifty-four per cent of the principals responded to this invitation. Although some of their comments relate to pre-service education of elementary teachers, many of their suggestions were specifically related to the question of school-college collaboration in in-service programs.

Aside from occasional comments critical of pre-service screening of teacher candidates--their mastery of English and their versatility in adapting methods to children of different abilities--the most frequent suggestions with reference to this period of professional education were that student teaching be in "difficult" schools and that students observe in classrooms before undertaking their student teaching. These two recommendations constitute a third of all comments on pre-service education.

As might be expected in the light of their responses to the checklist proper, these principals most frequently suggested in-service programs in general and specific methods, planning, and behavior control. Unlike their responses to the checklist, principals' comments showed frequent concern with beginning teachers' competence in clerical routines and in classroom management.

Four suggestions bearing on the character of in-service programs for beginning teachers were made with sufficient frequency to warrant consideration. These are:

1. Emphasis on practical, specific classroom procedures and techniques utilizing actual courses of study, texts and other teaching aids.
2. Organization of in-service programs in workshops and problem-solving classes.
3. Exploration of school-college collaboration on programs located within the school district.
4. Development of closer ties between the school and college in planning and staffing in-service courses.

A number of principals mentioned the desirability of staffing in-service courses with instructors who have current or recent school experience; a few expressed interest in securing consultative services from college faculty. A large number of the principals in this study seem interested in working cooperatively with the college to develop in-service programs that would meet the specific needs of beginning teachers in particular school situations.

The questionnaire did not ask principals to discriminate between those difficulties and needs more appropriately met by school orientation and in-service programs and those which might be better met by college or joint school and college programs. This question is an important one since it is likely that certain types of professional competence are best achieved by

in-service training in individual schools or school districts. A case in point is that of training in pupil accounting and clerical duties. Activities of this kind are not rated high in difficulty by these principals; they are mentioned only a few times in comments relating to pre-service training, although frequently cited in recommendations for in-service training.

Where does the responsibility for training for competence in these activities lie? The results of the study of the problems perceived by beginning teachers in their first through their sixth semester of teaching will, it is hoped, be helpful in discriminating between persistent problems on which school and college collaboration is desirable, and transient problems more appropriately met by school orientation and induction programs. Certainly it is as important to give careful consideration to how, where, and by whom in-service programs are offered as it is to determine their content.

Implications. This study did not ask principals to assess the difficulties of Hunter graduates but of beginning teachers generally. The results, however, raise certain questions concerning the preparation of elementary school teachers that may be relevant to specific college programs.

1. Does the area of methods receive sufficient emphasis in the total professional program?
2. In particular, does the professional program give sufficient attention to methods of teaching the basic elementary curriculum areas: reading and the language

arts, mathematics, science, and the social studies?

3. Is instruction in methods sufficiently concrete to be of maximum applicability in actual teaching situations? Are prospective teachers made familiar with specific courses of study, textbooks, films and other teaching aids appropriate to different grade levels and to slow, average, and gifted children?

4. Do prospective teachers receive sufficient first-hand experience in classroom management, planning and teaching to give them a sense of mastery of these basic professional activities?

5. Is the field experience of prospective teachers sufficiently varied to familiarize them with different school populations and the problems incident to teaching in "average" and "difficult" schools?